

MOGOK VIPASSANA MEDITATION METHOD IN MYANMAR: A

HISTORICAL STUDY

SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

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SUMMARY

Myanmar is widely acknowledged as a Theravada Buddhist country where Vipassan (insight) meditation practice is prominent. Vipassana is studied not only as a traditional, comprehensible and applicable way of life but also as an essential guide to the final emancipation. Besides, in Myanmar, Vipassana practice is pursued not only by monks and nuns but also by lay people. When someone talks about the Vipassana meditation methods and its tradition of Myanmar, the first and foremost thing that came to mind is Mahasi or Mogok methods, which have the largest number of followers. In Theravada Buddhism Mogok Vipassana meditation method which will be discussed in this dissertation is essential and meditative technique is so significant, for those who want to practice Vipassana meditation. **The purpose of** this dissertation is subjected to understand about the Mogok Vipassana Meditation method, to study how to take Mogok Vipassana meditation method in Myanmar, and to analyze the centrality of Mogok Vipassana meditation method in Myanmar. This dissertation is based on historical method using Pali Cannons, Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries as primary, especially, Buddhist literature.

The meditation is the remedy for problems. Medical science and therapy is not so effective in helping a person to eradicate mental disturbances such as frustration and worries because they arise not as a result of natural disorders, but are mind created. The mind is the most powerful in the world. A single thought appearing in this invisible mind can either save or destroy the world the mind is a gold mine but people pollute it. Therefore, it is important that the mind must be properly guided by discipline and reason to avoid mental pollution.

According to Albert Einstein, even atomic energy, which has shaken the world, such is the nature of the mind, without religious guidance: it is difficult to train the mind. Man had turned the whole into a time bomb because of his ego, anger and selfishness which the life of every living being is in danger, by the various inventions which brighter people have made but which are misused by those in power.

The Buddha has said, in Dhammapada, “He who can conquer a million men in battle is not real conqueror; but he who conquers himself alone is indeed the noblest conqueror”. No enemy can harm one so much as one’s thoughts of cravings, thoughts of hatred. These internal enemies harm as more than external enemies. All living beings suffer more due to worries, enmity arising from mind. Everybody needs to try to overcome them by using the mental power

of concentration and understanding. Everyone must understand that mind also needs the same things as body of man needs washing, feeding and medicating. When the mind is washed by Vipassana meditation, the mind is to be free from the sickness of greed, anger and delusion with the supreme medicine of the Dhamma. By meditating the Vipassana, mind of all living beings is able to attain to Nibbana, free from suffering. For those who want to hold essential value, Vipassana is ready to provide them, get real with irrespective of original religious beliefs. Therefore, Vipassana is the most important meditation for problems of daily life.

In present world, everyone is seeking for the way to overcome from sorrow and suffering to keep oneself in peaceful state of mind. Actually sorrow and suffering are the common problems which humanity is facing in the present global world order. These are universal diseases, not the bane of any one nation or person of particular colour or creed.

Therefore, the remedy also must be universal in nature. This can only be possible by following *Vipassana* meditation. It can be achieved through practicing the true *Vipassana* meditational methods. The *Buddha* had said “*Akaseva padam natthi samano natthi bhahire*” which means *there is no footstep in the sky; no true monk is found outside the Buddhist Order*. *Vipassana* is available only during the time of the *Buddha’s Sasana* and only in the societies of the *Buddha’s Sasana*. *The seeds of Sila (morality) and Samadhi (concentration) can be obtained at will at any time. But the seeds of Panna (wisdom) can be obtained only when one encounters a Buddha’s Sasana. Outside of a Buddha Sasana, one does not get the opportunity of even hearing the mere mention of words associated with Panna, though an infinite number of “sunna”(empty) world-cycles may elapse. Hence, those persons of the present day who are fortunate enough to be born into this world while a Buddha’s Sasana flourishes, if they intend to accumulate the seeds of magga- nana (knowledge of the path) and phala nana (knowledge of the fruits of the path).* Therefore, we should seek and accumulate the seed of *Vipassana Panna*- the wisdom of insight in the present time as much as we can. The key instructions for *Vipassana* practice are found in the *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* in the *Pali*. According to S. N. Goenka, *Vipassana* is the art of living which is guide us to know how to overcome from sorrow and suffering for all people.

To reach at the goal, the method or the way is very important. To know the methods or the ways, the guide is very important. Let’s see the value of *Vipassana* and the methods of *Vipassana* are so important. How the *Buddha* and his disciples find out the *Dhamma* and the

ways to reach *Dhamma*, how they contribute their *Dhamma* from the time of the Buddha to the present day.

Therefore, the thesis entitled ' *Mogok Vipassana Meditation Method in Myanmar: A Historical Study*' has been worked out. In this thesis, a historical study of Mogok Vipassana meditation method is well and systematically organized in the following chapters.

Chapter-One has dealt with **the introduction**. In this chapter, the historical background of Vipassana which has expounded by the Buddha his lifetime for forty five, has been discussed. And then this chapter has also explained the historical development of Vipassana from Konbaung dynasty to the present in Myanmar, the development of Vipassana of the people started from the king Mindon, patronaged not only for Pali literature but also encouraged to practice Vipassana. Furthermore, this chapter shows Vipassana meditation masters and their impact on tradition and culture in Myanmar for three periods such as the period of Konbaung dynasty, the period of colonial era and the period of modern era, especially, the period emerged Mogok Sayadaw (1899-1962).

Chapter-Two has dealt with the Buddha's teachings used by Mogok Sayadaw on *Vipassana* meditation method in Myanmar. In this chapter, the division of Samatha (concentration) and *Vipassana* (insight) are explained with the help of *Anapana Sati* (the mindfulness of breathing), *Vedananupassana* (contemplation of the feeling), *Cittanupassana* (contemplation of consciousness) and *Paticcasamuppada* (the cycle of dependent origination).

The **first** *Anapana Sati* (the mindfulness of breathing) which is composed four ways in *Pali* text is as followed:

1. "Ever mindful, he breathes in, ever mindful, he breaths out".
2. "Breathing in a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing in long breath"; breathing out a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing out long breath." "Breathing in a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a short breath"; breathing out a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a short breath."
3. "Making clear the entire in-breath body, I shall breathe in," thus he makes efforts (literally, he trains himself) "making clear the entire out-breath body, I shall breathe out," thus he makes efforts."

4. “*Calming the gross in-breath (literally, body-conditioned things), I shall breathe in,*” thus he makes efforts: “*calming the gross out-breath, I shall breathe out,*” thus he makes efforts”.

The **second** *Vedananupassana* (contemplation of the feeling) is mostly found in ‘*Mahasatipatthana sutta*’ such as the pleasantness, unpleasantness, or neutrality of feelings. Feeling is a more appropriate word than the sensation in rendering of *Vedana*. Feeling enjoys the taste of the sense-object. According to the commentaries feeling is like a king who enjoys a delicious dish prepared for him. Feeling is very important to worldly people. People are struggling day and night for the enjoyment of sensual pleasure which is nothing but pleasant feeling. It should be noted here that *Nibbanic* bliss is not connected with feeling. *Nibbanic* bliss is certainly the highest happiness (*Sukha*), but it is the happiness of being freed from suffering. It is not the enjoyment of a pleasurable object.

The **third** *Cittanupassana* (contemplation of consciousness) is also mostly found in ‘*Mahasatipatthana sutta*’. Consciousness (*citta*) is a part of the mind. In the teachings of the Buddha, there are two component parts of the mind: consciousness and mental factors. “Consciousness” is that which is aware of an object. It is the bare awareness of an object. “Mental factors-cetasikas” are what colors consciousness. They arise together with the consciousness and modify the consciousness. When the mental factors arise, they arise together with certain kinds of consciousness. Though consciousness is emphasized in this section, consciousness and mental factors cannot be separated. When you observe consciousness, you also observe the mental factors. When you have anger in your mind, and note it, “*anger, anger, anger,*” as you practice the contemplation of this consciousness. “*Anger*” means, your mind is angry, or “I have a consciousness that is accompanied by anger.” So when you note, “*anger, anger, anger,*” you are practicing this kind of meditation, the Contemplation of Consciousness.

The **four** *Paticcasamuppada* (the cycle of dependent origination) is mostly found in ‘*Vinaya pitaka*’. The *Paticca Samuppada*, or the Cycle of dependent Origination, summarizes the Buddha's teaching on the conditionality of all physical and mental phenomena of living beings.

The formula of *Paticca Samuppada* is as follows:

1. *Avijja paccaya Sankhara*: through Ignorance are conditioned the Sankharas, that is, the rebirth producing kamma-formations.

2. *Sankhara paccaya Vinnanam*: through the kamma-formations are conditioned consciousness.
3. *Vinnana paccaya nama-rupam*: through Consciousness are conditioned Mind and Matter.
4. *Nama-rupa paccaya salayatanam*: through the physical and mental phenomena are conditioned the "6" Bases.
5. *Salayatana paccaya phasso*: through the "6" Bases is conditioned (sensorial) Impression.
6. *Phassa paccaya vedana*: through Impression is conditioned feeling.
7. *Vedana paccaya tanha*: through Feeling is conditioned Craving.
8. *Tanha paccaya upadanam*: through Craving is conditioned Clinging.
9. *Upadana paccaya bhavo*: through Clinging is conditioned the process of kamma-formations and becoming (kammabhava and Upapattibhava).
10. *Bhava paccaya jati*: through the process of kamma-formation (kammabhava) is conditioned Rebirth.
11. *Jati paccaya jara-marana-soka-parideva- dukkha-domanassa-upayasa sambhavanti*: through Rebirth are conditioned Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Suffering, Grief and Despair.

Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakhandhassa sumudayo hoti: thus arises this whole mass of suffering.

In above mentioned the Buddha's teachings, for those who want to practice Vipassana meditation, can support to purify one's mind by destroying defilements of manifestation. Finally, these teachings can support to uproot the defilements of latent tendency.

Chapter-Three has dealt with Mogok Vipassana meditation method and the biography of Mogok Sayadaw. In Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar, Mogok Sayadaw (1899-1962) named U Vimala was famous Vipassana meditation master. He established the Mogok tradition of Vipassana meditation on the soil of Myanmar during between the colonial and modern era. *In his lifetime, he taught various methods such as cittanupassana (contemplation of the consciousness), vedananupassana (contemplation of feeling) and Paticcasamuppada (the cycle of dependent origination)*. On the other hand, after the passing way of the Mogok Sayadaw, his teachings become more popular in Myanmar as the '*Patichsamuppada (the cycle of dependent origination)*'.

Firstly, in the *Cittanupassana (Contemplation of the consciousness)*, Mogok Sayadaw' formulated a very simple method of the contemplation of consciousness. It is easy and suitable for the meditators. It is generally believed that there are many kinds of consciousness which occur in our being. There may be one or two thousand consciousness but they fall into the classification of only thirteen consciousness. They are as follows

1. Eye Consciousness.
2. Ear consciousness.
3. Nose consciousness
4. Tongue consciousness
5. Body consciousness

They are called External Visiting Consciousness.

1. Desiring consciousness.
2. Aversion consciousness.
3. Delusion consciousness.
4. Non-greed consciousness
5. Non-Aversion consciousness
6. Mind consciousness.

These are called Internal Visiting Consciousness.

1. In breathing consciousness.
2. Out breathing consciousness

Secondly, *vedananupassana (contemplation of feeling)* was also taught by Mogok Sayadaw on feeling. Feeling arises whenever there is the impact of the three phenomena, i.e. sensory organ, object and consciousness. The impact of these three is contact. The proximate cause of feeling is contact. It is said, '*aggregates paticca feeling because of aggregates, there arises feeling*'. Therefore, feeling is not to be purposely searched for. It arises whenever and wherever there is contact. Feeling arising on eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base are neutral neither pleasure nor displeasure yet. Feeling arising in the body is either pleasant or unpleasant. The feeling which arises in the mind is either pleasant or unpleasant or neutral. Six external visitors are:

1. Neutral feeling arising on eye-base

2. Neutral feeling arising on ear-base
3. Neutral feeling arising on nose-base
4. Neutral feeling arising on tongue-base
5. Pleasant feeling arising on body-base
6. Unpleasant feeling arising on body-base

Three internal visitors are:

1. Pleasant feeling on mind-base
2. Unpleasant feeling on mind-base
3. Neutral feeling on mind-base

Three host visitors are:

1. In-breathing and out-breathing with pleasant feeling in the event of joy, pleasure or in the state of elation.
2. In-breathing and out-breathing with unpleasant feeling in the event of displeasure, pain or despair.
3. In-breathing and out-breathing with neutral feeling in the event of neither pleasure nor displeasure.

we could understand why our life becomes and how it can cease. This is very important for our lives. The present work will explore *Paticcasamuppada* both the theoretical and practical ways.

There are twelve factors in the *Paticcasamuppada*:

1. Avijja- ignorance or delusion
2. Sankhara- kamma-formations
3. Vinnana- consciousness
4. Nama-rupa - mind and matter
5. Salayatana - six sense bases
6. Phassa - contact
7. Vedana - feeling
8. Tanha - craving
9. Upadana - clinging
10. Bhava - becoming
11. Jati - rebirth
12. Jara-marana- old age and death

Because of the ignorance, the volitional activities occur; because of the volitional activities, minds occur. These are the process the causes and effects as such because of A, B arise; because of B, C arise. If the causes cease the effects also not arise. If there is no A, it is no possibility for B also. If B cease, C also cannot arise.

Mogok Sayadaw had expounded the Law of Dependent Origination of the groups of existence (*Khandha Paticcasamuppada*) for the benefit of the intending Yogis. He used it as a shortcut to the contemplation or meditation work for the Yogi, because it teaches the present aspect the working of the doctrine. If we understand the cause and the effects of the aggregate, we can remove the wrong view (*Sakkayaditthi*) which is believed 'I', 'my', 'mine' on the just combination of five aggregates.

Actually Dependent Origination is the cyclic order of lives. It is only the arising and passing away of five aggregates: form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness. One phenomenon gives rise to another constantly as a nature of *Dhamma*. Therefore, there is no Creator or God, Ego, Self, I, he, she etc. This functioning is just only the relining of Dependent Origination. This links can be broken only by insight knowledge of *Vipassana Dhamma*.

“Tesameva ca mulanam nirodhena nirujjhati- By the destruction of these roots (ignorance and craving) the round ceases.

Chapter-Four has dealt with Vipassana meditation as a way to liberation. In this chapter, especially, the main object of Vipassana meditation which is the realization of the ultimate goal of life leading to Nibbana is explained. And this chapter has also mentioned that to develop Vipassana is to be the individual, society, education, science and materialism.

And then, **conclusion** has also shown the brief of previous four chapters and important observations on the seven kinds of the benefits of the mindfulness from *Mahasatipatthana-sutta* point of view that whoever wanted to succeed in one's life, and cut away or demolish all the tangle of craving as well as all other defilements that had overgrown one's own life's continuity.